



COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES
Public Health

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April 21, 2003

Dear Physician,


The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services (LACDHS) is adding skin, soft tissue, and invasive MRSA infections occurring in hospitalized children < 18 to its list of reportable diseases to enhance surveillance of this serious infection. The reporting requirement will extend for six months, from May 5th-November 7th, 2003. Exempt from the reporting requirement will be children with nosocomial (healthcare associated) MRSA, unless as part of an outbreak.

Healthcare providers, as defined by Title 17 of the California Code of regulations (CCR) Section 2500 and clinical laboratories will be required to report these cases. Cases should be reported using a standard Confidential Morbidity Report (CMR) form or may be called into the Morbidity Unit of the LACDHS (Tel: (213) 240-7821 Fax: 888-397-3778). The antibiogram of the MRSA isolate should be submitted with the CMR and the isolate should be sent to the Public Health Laboratory (313 North Figueroa, Los Angeles, CA 90012) with the name of the patient, source of the isolate, and date of collection.

Staphylococcus aureus or "Staph" is a common cause of skin and soft tissue infections. Over the past several decades, infection with methicillin-resistant *S. aureus* (MRSA) among hospitalized patients has become common. However, in Los Angeles County, MRSA skin infections have been increasingly reported in people of all ages, including young children, without traditional risk factors for MRSA (e.g. significant exposure to health care or antibiotics). The reporting requirement will allow for the timely ascertainment of transmission patterns and risk factors for MRSA in the community by LACDHS. Data such as these may provide useful in the development of prevention and control strategies of this disease.

The Los Angeles County Department of Health Services has issued guidelines for patients and healthcare providers on the diagnosis, prevention, and treatment of community-acquired MRSA which may be found on the following web site: <http://lapublichealth.org/acd/MRSA.htm>. For more questions about MRSA, you can contact the Acute Communicable Disease Control program of the LACDHS at 213-240-7941.

Sincerely,


Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director of Public Health and Health Officer

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